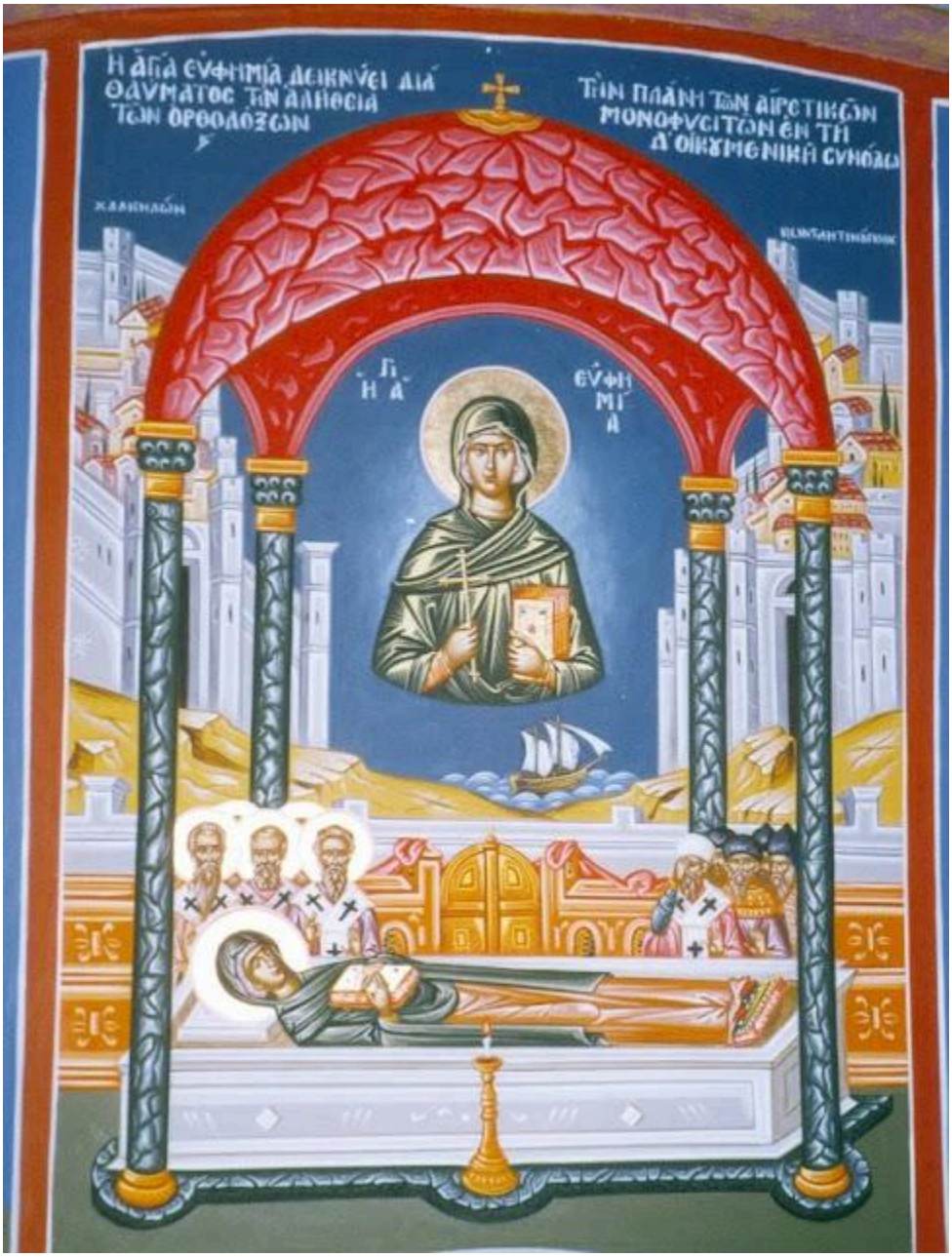
THE ANTI-CHALCEDONIAN CONFESSIONS IGNORE THE FILIOQUE



The Miracle of St. Euphemia at the Fourth Ecumenical Council

It is worth particular attention that all the heretical Confessions, which have separated from the ancient Eastern Church and are still maintained today in the East, ignore the heretical Latin doctrine of the *Filioque* in their Symbols and their theology. This concerns the so-called "Anti-Chalcedonian Churches," among which the pre-Chalcedonian Assyrian Nestorian Confession is usually counted.**1** Anti-Chalcedonian or Post-Chalcedonian or "Lesser Eastern Churches" include the Armenian, the Syriac Jacobite Armenian, or the "Syrian Church of

Malabar" in South India, the "Coptic Church," and the "Ethiopian Church" that arose from it.**2** The "Assyrian Nestorian Church" is mistakenly counted among the Non-Chalcedonian or Post-Chalcedonian Confessions and Communities. However, it separated as a heretical Community and Confession after the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (431 A.D.) and before the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon (451 A.D.).**3**

1. The Filioque is unknown to the Non-Chalcedonian Confessions.

A. The Coptic Confession ignores the Filioque.

The Copts, having split from the ancient Eastern Church as Monophysites, have maintained the orthodox teaching regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father. The *Filioque* found no entrance into Coptic theology, as the Copts used the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. According to Athanasios Arvanitis, who has engaged explicitly with the history and theology of the non-Chalcedonian confessions, "the Copts, like the other Eastern Churches, reject the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son, preserving the clear teaching of St. Athanasius and St. Cyril of Alexandria on this matter."**4**

B. The Syriac-Jacobite confession ignores the Filioque.

More generally, the dogmatic teaching of the Syriac-Jacobites is similar to that of the Copts. They are unaware of the *Filioque*. They use "the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed without any modification" as their official symbol of faith and accept the orthodox doctrine regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone.**5** The Syriac-Jacobites reject not only the heretical Latin *Filioque* but also other papal heretical innovations, the purgatorial fire, the papal primacy and infallibility, the Latin doctrine of satisfaction, as well as the Protestant heretical new teachings.**6**

C. The Armenian confession regarding the Filioque.

Athanasios Arvanitis, referring to the doctrine of procession among the Armenians, observes: "The teaching concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit is orthodox. Despite the claims of the Latins, which are based on certain isolated instances and the forced acceptance of this at the Synod of Sienna (1251), during which the teaching regarding the *Filioque* was maintained until the 13th century without any official condemnation existing to this day — references to certain hymns that are dogmatically indifferent and the personal opinions of some ecclesiastical writers do not express the official position of the Church — nowhere in the Armenian Church is there an authentic reference about the procession of the Holy Spirit also from the Son."**7**

D. The Ethiopian Confession accepts the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

The Ethiopian Confession ignores the Latin *Filioque* since it holds the same doctrinal teaching as the Coptic Confession. The Ethiopians accept the "first three Ecumenical Councils and confess the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed."**8** The proselytising orders of the Vatican have repeatedly attempted to transmit to the Ethiopians the heretical Latin credo, but the Ethiopians reacted and endured "horrible martyrdoms and fierce persecutions" from the Latins, yet they were not persuaded and did not accept the corruption of their Confession.**9**

E. The Syrian Confession of Malabar ignores the Filioque.

According to John Karmiris, the Christians of Thomas in Malabar, Southern India, "initially embraced Nestorianism, then turned to Roman Catholicism, and finally converted, ending up in Monophysitism."**10** Initially, the Syrian Confession of Malabar did not have the *Filioque*; it adopted it when it converted to Papism and rejected it when it turned to Monophysitism. The Malabar Confession, arising from the Syrian Jacobite, now ignores the *Filioque*. According to the Bishop of Achaea, Panteleimon, and now Metropolitan of Corinth, who studied the Malabar Confession locally, it "has removed the *Filioque* from the symbol of faith…"**11** The Syrian Jacobites of Mardin confess the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed with some differences, perhaps due to the "translation of it, made from the Greek original into Syrian and thereafter into the English language."**12** According to Athanasios Arvanitis, among the Syrian Jacobites of Mardin, "it is confessed in the Creed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, but as it is stated, through the Son (*etuk-kappettivän*)."**13**

The Holy Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council condemn the Monophysite heresy.

2. The Pre-Chalcedonian Assyrian Nestorian Confession ignores the Filioque.

With the Non-Chalcedonians or Post-Chalcedonian Confessions of the East, which split from the ancient Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church, the Pre-Chalcedonian Assyrian Nestorian Confession is usually counted, having separated after the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus in 431 AD.

The Nestorian Assyrian Confession has a symbolic statement of faith for use, which, "while doctrinally equivalent to that of Nicaea - Constantinople, differs in verbal formulation and phraseology from the one introduced at the council of 410 in Seleucia."**14** The present Symbol of the Assyrian Nestorians ignores the heretical Latin doctrine of *Filioque* and, in terms of wording, differs from both the Symbol of Nicaea - Constantinople and the Symbol of the Assyrian Nestorians used by the council of 585, convened by Isho'yahb I (fl. 581-596). The verbal differences among the three Symbols regarding the article on procession are illustrated better in the following comparison:

Symbol of Nicaea - Constantinople.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the life-giving, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets.

Symbol of Assyrian Nestorians, Isho'yahb I (585).

And in one Holy Spirit, the Lord, the life-giving, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped, who spoke through the prophets and apostles.

The present Symbol of the Assyrian Nestorians.

And in one Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, the life-giving Spirit.**15**

Indeed, the pre-Chalcedonian Assyrian Nestorian Confession, as well as the aforementioned Anti-Chalcedonian Confessions, having separated from the ancient Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church, received in their Symbols the orthodox doctrine regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father. In contrast, the anti-papal Confessions of the West received from papism the *Filioque* as another "ancestral sin." The absence of the heretical *Filioque* from the heretical Anti-Chalcedonian Confessions of the East entirely disproves the theory of Roman Catholic theologians, according to which the ancient Eastern Church taught the procession of the Holy Spirit also from the Son. If the *Filioque* existed in the ancient Eastern Church, surely the Anti-Chalcedonian Confessions of the East would have retained it as another "ancestral sin"

even after their separation, as happened in the West with Protestantism, Anglicanism, and Old Catholicism. And from the testimony of the lesser heretical Confessions of the East arises the certain conclusion that the *Filioque,* unknown in Holy Scripture, in the theology of the Ecumenical Councils and the God-bearing Fathers, was embedded in the Latin creed as a historical heretical novelty, became the primary schismatising cause, and remains still as the principal reason for the perpetuation of the tragedy of the Schism. When will the theology of the West be baptised in the sacred waters of Synodal and Patristic theology, awaken from its delusion, and take the sword of the Spirit to cut out from the Latin Symbol the cancer of *Filioque,* under which this dogma of the Most Holy, Life-giving, and Worshiped Trinity is corrupted and distorted?

The Anti-Chalcedonians Confessions ignore the heretical *Filioque* and other papal heresies. However, they still hold sufficiently heretical teachings, and therefore, studying the Ecumenists of the East towards union with the Anti-Chalcedonians is hazardous from an orthodox perspective. Professor Panagiotis Trembelas has already pointed out the danger of the hasty and careless handling of the unifying dialogue of Orthodox theologians with the heretical Anti-Chalcedonians in a series of articles published in the journal *Sotir*.**16**

According to P. Trembelas, "the present-day Anti-Chalcedonians rightly accept the undivided union of the two natures, but they insist on rejecting the Tome of Leo, which was incorporated into the definitions of the Fourth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils, and furthermore, they do not consider it correct to speak of two natures in Christ after their union; they also adhere to a certain kind of monotheletism and monenergism and regarding the acceptance of the last four Ecumenical Councils, they remain obstinate."**17**

The heretical Anti-Chalcedonians accept the heretic Dioscorus as a saint. He was a leading figure at the robber council of 449 in Ephesus and was anathematised by the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon. However, during the fourth unofficial meeting of Orthodox and Anti-Chalcedonian theologians held in Addis Ababa in 1971, it was agreed that "lifting the anathemas issued against the saints and teachers of both sides by one another constitutes an essential step towards the unity of the two traditions, namely the Orthodox and the Anti-Chalcedonian."**18** How is it possible to lift the anathema of an Ecumenical Council against the heresiarch Dioscorus, who died in the error of heresy? The relentless unifying diplomacy of Eastern Ecumenism, disregarding even the Ecumenical Councils, rushes to lift the anathema against Dioscorus, leading to an unacceptable concession to the heretical Anti-Chalcedonians, who persist in honouring the heresiarch Dioscorus as a saint. Professor Panagiotis Trembelas, assessing the fourth unofficial meeting of Orthodox and Anti-Chalcedonian theologians in Addis Ababa, writes: "Thus, any unbiased person under the burden can judge from even these few, among countless other selections, what kind of conspiracy was agreed upon in Addis Ababa by Anti-Chalcedonians and Orthodox or the full abolition of the anathemas."**19**

The potential lifting of the anathema against Dioscorus by the Orthodox would put this Orthodox faith in direct danger. The Pan-Orthodox Council, which might decide the union of the heretical Anti-Chalcedonians with the Orthodox through the amnesty of the heresiarch Dioscorus, would not differ substantially from the robber council in Ephesus of 449!

The Relics of St. Ephemia in Constantinople.

NOTES

1. According to recent statistics [this book was written in 1972], the population of the Anti-Chalcedonian or Non-Chalcedonian religious communities of the East amounts, in total, to approximately 22 million. That is, 1) the "Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria" has 3,500,000 members and is based in Cairo, 2) the "Ethiopian Orthodox Church" has 14,000,000 members and is based in Addis Ababa, 3) the "Armenian Orthodox Church" has 3,000,000 members and is based in Etchmiadzin, U.S.S.R., 4) the "Syrian Orthodox Church" has 200,000 members in the Middle East and Western countries and is based in Damascus, and 5) the "Syrian Orthodox Church of India" has

1,250,000 members and is based in Kottayam, India (Journal *Episkesis*, No. 12, (18. 8. 1970), p. 5).

2. According to John Karmiris, the Anti-Chalcedonian Confessions "are characterised either as Monophysitic in general, or as Monophysitizing by us, because, although they condemn the founder of unrestrained and pure Monophysitism, Eutyches, and his teaching regarding the confusion and alteration of the two natures in Christ, they nevertheless overemphasise the 'one nature' in Christ after the union, namely the divine one, leaving in the shadow the human nature of the Lord, which they do not deny, just as Eutyches does. They generally have at the centre of their Christological teaching the phrase and teaching of Saint Cyril of Alexandria, 'one nature of the God the Logos incarnate,' but interpreted neither clearly nor correctly. These are also characterised as Anti-Chalcedonian Churches because, as we said, they rejected the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon as supposedly Nestorian. Consequently, they also rejected its dogmatic definition. However, their disagreement seems to reference not so much the essence as the formulation of the teaching about the union of the two natures of that Council, to the extent that some among them have even endeavoured to achieve a certain combination of the two types: Chalcedonian and Anti-Chalcedonian. Indeed, these Churches, primarily distinguished into three types: the Armenian, the Jacobite (Syro-Jacobite and Malabar Church) and the Coptic (Coptic Church in Egypt and Ethiopia), remain in the teachings of the first three Ecumenical Councils, having the consciousness that they have not deviated from Orthodoxy, for which they self-title as 'Orthodox'..." (John Karmiris, *The Ancient Anti-Chalcedonian Churches of the East and the Basis of Their Reunion with the Orthodox Catholic Church*, p. 4, Athens, 1966. See also *Theology*, October - December 1964, vol. LE', issue 4, pp. 563, 564). — After the war, theological discussions began between the Orthodox Church and the Anti-Chalcedonian Confessions to clarify the existing doctrinal and other differences. Regarding these theological differences, see John Karmiris, *The Ancient Anti-Chalcedonian Churches of the East and the Basis of Their Reunion with the Orthodox Catholic Church*, Athens, 1966. See also John Karmiris, *Presentations before the Conferences of Orthodox and Anti-Chalcedonian Theologians*, Athens, 1970.
3. According to one statistic, the pre-Chalcedonian Assyrian Nestorian Confession, a small minority worldwide, has 120,000 members (John Karmiris, *The Ancient Anti-Chalcedonian Churches of the East and the Basis of Their Reunion with the Orthodox Catholic Church*, p. 8, Athens, 1966. See also *Theology*, October - December 1964, vol. LE', issue 4, p. 567).
4. Athanasios K. Arvanitis, *The Coptic Church,* p. 82, Athens, 1965. Also see John Karmiris, *The Ancient Anti-Chalcedonian Churches and the Basis of Their Reunification with the Orthodox Catholic Church*, p. 52, Athens, 1966. Also see *Theology*, April — June 1965, vol. 26, issue 2, p. 214.

5. Athanasios K. Arvanitis, A *Concise History of the Syrian-Jacobite Armenian and Ethiopian Church*, p. 42, Athens, 1967.
6. John Karmiris, *The Ancient Anti-Chalcedonian Churches of the East and the Basis of Their Reunification with the Orthodox Catholic Church*, p. 30, Athens, 1966. Also see *Theology*, January — March 1965, vol. 26, issue 1, p. 81, 82.
7. Athanasios Arvanitis, *A Concise History of the Syrian-Jacobite Armenian and Ethiopian Church*, p. 91, 92. The Armenians recognise the first three Ecumenical Councils and the doctrines established under them and believe that, through them, "the agreement of the whole Church on the doctrines was expressed and formulated" (Athanasios Arvanitis, *op. cit.*, p. 90).
8. Athanasios Arvanitis, *A Concise History of the Syrian-Jacobite Armenian and Ethiopian Church*, p. 110, Athens, 1967. Also see John Karmiris, *The Ancient Anti-Chalcedonian Churches of the East and the Basis of Their Reunification with the Orthodox Catholic Church*, Articles, also see *Theology,* April — June 1965, vol. 26, issue 2, p. 227.
9. Athanasios Arvanitis, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
10. John Karmiris, *The Ancient Anti-Chalcedonian Churches of the East and the Basis of Their Reunification with the Orthodox Catholic Church*, Articles, see *Theology*, January - March 1965, volume LVI, issue A, p. 88. See Athanasios Arvanitis, *The Apostle Thomas and the Syrian Church of Malabar in history and the present,* p. 220, Athens, 1962. — The Vatican, for the success of its anti-Christian proselytising plans, "in the 17th century used the Portuguese conquerors of Malabar to impose through violence the unity of the Christians of Thomas with Rome. In particular, the Latin archbishop Alexios Menezes convened a synod in 1599 in Udayamperoor and forced the Christians of Thomas to renounce Nestorianism and accept Latin doctrines and ecclesiastical customs, imposing especially the provisions of the Tridentine Council and successfully implementing Latinization almost of them. But this caused such resistance that after half a century, out of the 200,000 Christians of Thomas, only 400 remained faithful to the Roman Church, until in 1665, the Christians of Thomas became Jacobites..." (John Karmiris, *Op. cit*., *Theology,* vol. LVI, issue A, January — March 1965, pp. 85, 86. See also Athanasios Arvanitis, *Op. cit.*, pp. 116 - 144).
11. John Karmiris, *Op. cit*., see *Theology,* January — March 1965, vol. LVI, issue A, p. 88, note 1.
12. Athanasios Arvanitis, *The Apostle Thomas and the Syrian Church of Malabar in history and in the present*, p. 221, Athens,
13. Athanasios Arvanitis, *op. cit.*, p. 225.
14. Athanasios Arvanitis, *History of the Assyrian Nestorian Church*, p. 251, Athens, 1968.
15. Athanasios Arvanitis, *op. cit.,* p. 252.
16. P. N. Trembelas, "Orthodoxy and Monophysitism," see the magazine *Sotir*, No. 528 (1.12.1971), pp. 673 - 675, No. 529 (8.12.1971), pp. 689 - 691 and 698, No. 530 (15.12.1971), pp. 705 - 706 and No. 534 (19.1.1972), pp. 33, 34, 35.

17. P. N. Trembelas, Orthodoxy and Monophysitism, see the magazine "Soter," No. 528 (1.12.1971), p. 674.
18. P. N. Trembelas, Orthodoxy and Monophysitism, see the magazine "Soter," No. 528 (1.12.1971), pp. 673 and 674. See also "Apostle Barnabas," May - June, 1971.
19. P. N. Trembelas, Orthodoxy and Monophysitism, see the magazine "Soter," No. 530 (15.12.1971), pp. 705, 706.

Translated from the original Greek:

Αρχιμ. Σπυρίδωνος Σπ. Μπιλάλη,
Η αίρεσις του Filioque. Τόμος Α', ιστορική και κριτική θεώρησις του Filioque,
Ορθόδοξος Τύπος, 1972

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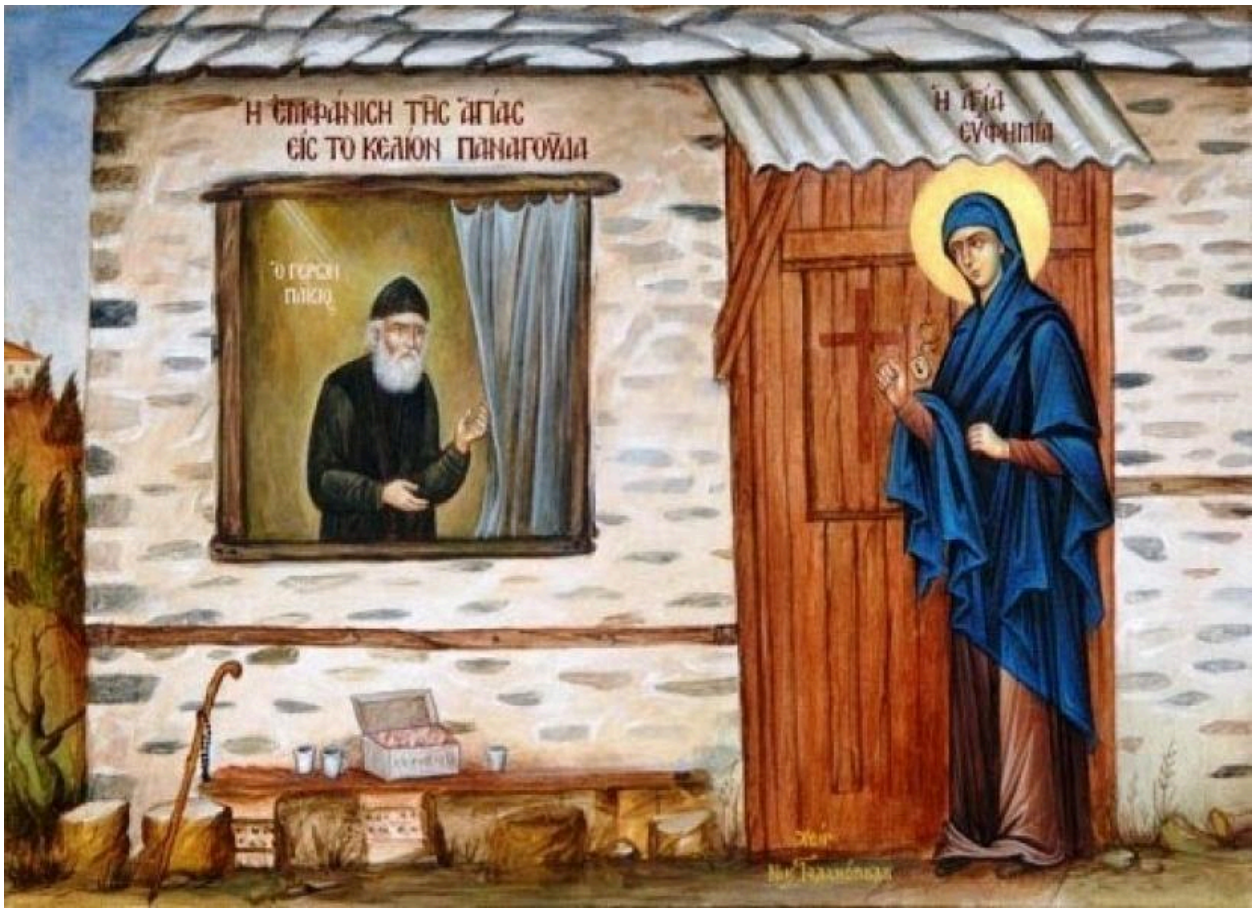

Icon of St. Euphemia visiting St. Paisios in his cell.

The Relics of St. Ephemia in Constantinople.